

ACCOUNT OF THE NORTHERN CONQUEST AND  
DISCOVERY OF HERNANDO DE SOTO<sup>1</sup>

by  
*Rodrigo Rangel*

(drawn from *Historia general y natural de las Indias*  
by  
*Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés*)

Newly Translated and Edited by  
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With Footnotes by  
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<sup>1</sup>There is no separate title provided by Oviedo for the Rangel account, and thus this title was constructed from passages in chapter 26 of Oviedo's work (see chapter 6).



# Introduction

## Rangel's Account of the Expedition

by John E. Worth

Rodrigo Rangel,<sup>2</sup> a native of Almendralejo, accompanied the De Soto expedition as the private secretary of Hernando de Soto. The account of this expedition attributed to him is included in the massive work *Historia general y natural de las Indias* by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés. As related below in chapter 6 of the account, Rangel gave a relation before the Audiencia Real in Santo Domingo soon after the expedition and was subsequently commanded to give a complete account of the De Soto expedition to Oviedo as the official royal historian of the Indies. The bulk of the Rangel account evidently derives from a detailed diary that he kept during the expedition, although some material appears to have been obtained by Oviedo through interviews with Rangel.

It is important to recognize that the text that follows is a product of Oviedo's hand, although it apparently follows the diary of Rangel closely. Certain passages were undoubtedly added by Oviedo, who often inserted personal commentary into the text of Rangel's account. These asides are easily extracted by the reader from Rangel's material.

The Rangel account is generally considered to be the most accurate of the four major extant accounts of the De Soto expedition. Notwithstanding this fact, the first and only published English translation of Rangel's complete text (first published in Spanish in its entirety in 1851<sup>3</sup>) was by Edward G. Bourne in 1904.<sup>4</sup>

The following translation is drawn from chapters 21 through 28 of Book XVII of Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias*. While minor

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<sup>2</sup>While this name is spelled Rangel in the list of survivors of the De Soto expedition appended to the Biedma account, the printed version of Oviedo's text is spelled Rangel, and this spelling is often found in the literature on the De Soto expedition.

<sup>3</sup>Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Academia de la Historia, 1851).

<sup>4</sup>Edward Gaylord Bourne, *Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto*, 2 vols. (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1904).

restructuring of the original syntax was necessary at times, the present translation is largely literal, following Oviedo's paragraph and sentence structure as closely as possible. All Indian names are preserved as originally printed in the Oviedo text, but the spelling of Spanish names and terms has been modernized. Where appropriate, certain Spanish terms remain untranslated. Interpolations by this editor are set off by brackets, and selected original Spanish terms are bracketed following their translation where they first appear in the account. Footnotes have been added to provide additional information where precise meaning seems important or where meaning is ambiguous, and to provide supplementary commentary and information.

# ONE

## HOW FERNANDO DE SOTO WENT TO GOVERN THE ISLAND OF CUBA OR FERNANDINA AS CAPTAIN GENERAL OF THEIR MAJESTIES, AND WITH TITLE OF ADELANTADO OF FLORIDA.

The Emperor our lord made as his Governor and Captain General of the island and province of Florida and its annexes on the mainland, to the northern part that the adelantado Juan Ponce de León<sup>5</sup> had discovered, Hernando de Soto, who was one of the soldiers of the Governor Pedrarias de Avila, and of whom, in the affairs of the mainland, mention is often made, because he was one of the earliest persons in those places, and in the end he found himself in the imprisonment of Atabaliba [Atahualpa], where he was one of those who gained a large part of those spoils.<sup>6</sup> And he put so great a portion of them in Spain, that it was rumored that he was seen with more than one hundred thousand pesos of gold in Castille, where for his services and merits he was very well treated by the Emperor our lord, and he made him a knight of the military Order of the apostle St. James and gave him other favors and made him his Governor and Captain General as stated. And being there in Castille, he married one of the daughters of Governor Pedrarias Dávila, whose name was Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, like her mother, a woman of great essence and goodness, and of very noble judgment and character, and with her he went to the island of Fernandina [Cuba], where he arrived in the month of [June<sup>7</sup>] of the year of fifteen thirty-nine. And after he had visited the island and its towns and provided what was suitable to the good state and sustenance of the land, he gave order to arm and cross to the mainland for the conquest, settlement, and pacification of those provinces that were entrusted to him by His Majesty; this history<sup>8</sup> will relate in the following chapters the things that occurred in this enterprise.

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<sup>5</sup>Ponce de León explored the Florida coastline in 1513.

<sup>6</sup>Hernando de Soto served in Central and South America between 1513 and 1535.

<sup>7</sup>The month is missing from the text, but other sources indicate that the date was June 7, 1539 [1538].

<sup>8</sup>Referring to Oviedo's *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, of which these chapters are only a part.

## TWO

THE DEPARTURE OF THE GOVERNOR HERNANDO  
DE SOTO FROM THE ISLAND OF CUBA, ALIAS  
FERNANDINA, FOR THE NORTHERN LAND  
OF THE MAINLAND, AND OF THE ARMADA  
AND PEOPLE THAT HE CARRIED FOR HIS  
DISCOVERY, AND OF THE HARDSHIP  
THAT THEY HAD IN DISEMBARKING,  
AND THE NUMBER OF HORSES AND  
OTHER THINGS HE CARRIED, AND  
HOW HE RECOVERED A CHRISTIAN,  
CALLED JUAN ORTIZ, WHO WAS  
LOST AND WALKED NUDE  
LIKE THE INDIANS.

Sunday, the eighteenth of May of fifteen thirty-nine, Governor Hernando de Soto left from the town<sup>9</sup> of Havana with a noble armada of nine ships, five with topsails, and two caravels and two brigantines. And on the twenty-fifth of the same month, which was the day of Whitsuntide,<sup>10</sup> land was sighted on the northern coast of the province of Florida,<sup>11</sup> and the armada dropped anchor two leagues from land, in four brazas<sup>12</sup> of depth or less. And the Governor boarded a brigantine in order to come see the land, and with him a gentleman called Juan de Añasco, and the principal pilot of the armada, called Alonso Martín, in order to reconnoiter what land that was, because they were doubtful of the port and which part they were in.<sup>13</sup> And not recognizing it, seeing that night was approaching, they wished to return to the ships, but the weather did not permit them, for it was contrary: so

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<sup>9</sup>The term *villa* is used for Havana, in contrast to *pueblo*, which is typically used to describe larger Indian settlements in Florida.

<sup>10</sup>*Pascua del Espíritu Santo*. The port at which the expedition landed would be named after the day when they sighted it.

<sup>11</sup>This passage refers to the northerly location of the coast of Florida with respect to the point of departure in Cuba.

<sup>12</sup>One *brazo* equals roughly 5.5 feet, making the depth under 22 feet.

<sup>13</sup>This port had already been reconnoitered by Juan de Añasco.

they anchored near land and came ashore, and they found traces of many Indians and a hut like the large ones that have been seen in the Indies,<sup>14</sup> and other small ones. It was said later that it was the town [*pueblo*] of Oçita.

The Governor and those who were with him were in no little danger, because they were few and without weapons, and no less was the anxiety of those who remained on the ships to see their Captain General in such a state, because they could neither aid nor help him if he needed it. In short, to personally take so much care was carelessness and too much diligence or lack of prudence on the part of the Governor, because those things are the responsibility of other persons and not the person who has to govern and rule the army, and it would have been enough to command a subordinate Captain to go on that reconnaissance and to provide for the security of the pilot who had to reconnoiter that coast. And the ships there were in great danger, and all the armada, in which there were five hundred seventy men not counting the sailors, and with these, there were a good seven hundred men.

The next day, Monday, in the morning, the brigantine was well leeward of the ships and working to reach them but unable to. Baltasar de Gallegos seeing this, he shouted loudly to the *Capitana*<sup>15</sup> so that the Lieutenant General, who was a nobleman called Vasco Porcallo, would take proper precautions; but as they did not hear him, in order to aid the Governor, he commanded a large caravel, in which this gentleman came as Captain, to weigh anchor, and to go toward where the brigantine appeared. And although the Governor regretted that, it was well done, inasmuch as it was in his service and in order to aid his person. In the end, it arrived where the brigantine was, and the Governor was very pleased. By this time the port was already reconnoitered, and the other brigantine placed at the canal as signal for the ships, and the brigantine of the Governor went to the front and placed the caravel itself in the canal of the port. And he commanded that it should take a position at one side of the canal and the brigantine at the other, so that the ships might pass through the middle; [the ships], which were about four or five leagues from there, now began to set sail; and it was necessary that the Governor should go to show them the way, because the main pilot was in his brigantine, and because there were many shallows through there. Even with all of that, two ships struck [bottom], but as the bottom was sand, they did

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<sup>14</sup>*Un bubio de los grandes que en Indias se ha visto*. This was probably a large public structure, or council house. Another similar structure was noted by Rangel in the town of Uriutina (see his chapter 4).

<sup>15</sup>Standard designation for the ship in an armada that carried the general.

not receive damage. This day the Governor and Juan de Añasco, who went as accountant of Their Majesties, had hard words, which the Governor concealed and endured.

The ships entered in the port with the sounder in hand, and although sometimes they struck [bottom], as it was silt,<sup>16</sup> they passed onward. In all this, they were detained five days without disembarking, but some people went ashore and brought water and grass for the horses. In the end, the shallows did not permit the loaded ships to arrive at where the town was, and they anchored four leagues back. Friday, which they reckoned to be the thirtieth of May, they began to unload the horses on land. The land where they disembarked is due north of the island of [Dry] Tortuga, which is in the mouth of the Bahama channel; and the cacique and lord of that land was named Ocita, and it is ten leagues to the west of the bay of Juan Ponce.<sup>17</sup>

As soon as some horses went on land, General Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa and Juan de Añasco and Francisco Osorio went riding to see something of the land, and they found ten Indians with bows and arrows, who also came, as warriors, to reconnoiter these Christian guests and learn what people they were; and they wounded two horses, and the Spaniards killed two of those Indians, and the rest fled.

Two hundred and forty-three horses went in that armada, and of those, nineteen or twenty died on the sea, and all the rest came ashore; and having disembarked, the General and several foot soldiers went with the brigantines to see the town, and a gentleman, called Gómez Arias, returned in one and gave good news of the land and said also that the [native] people were hidden.

On Sunday the first of June of the aforesaid year of fifteen thirty-nine, the day of the Trinity, this army traveled inland toward the town, carrying as guides four Indians that Juan de Añasco had taken when he went to discover the port; and they lost their bearings somewhat, either because they did not understand the Christians or because they did not speak the truth, for which reason the Governor took the lead with some on horseback; and as they did not have experience in the land, they tired the horses after deer and with the waters and swamps [*ciénagas*] that they crossed, and with the twelve leagues that they traveled before they arrived opposite the town. The inlet [*ancón*] of the port was between them [and the town], so that they were unable to go

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<sup>16</sup>The text reads *lama*, which indicates that the bottom was covered with a fine-grained silt, or muck, contrasting with the *arena*, or sand, described earlier.

<sup>17</sup>On the east coast of Florida.



around the inlet, and thus scattered in many places, they slept that night very fatigued and in no military order.

During all that week the ships arrived near the town, unloading them little by little with small boats [*bateles*], and thus they unloaded all the clothing and supplies that they carried. There were some roads, but no one knew or guessed which they should take in order to find natives of the land. The four Indians that they had did not understand them except very little and by signs, and it was difficult to guard them, as they did not have shackles. Tuesday, the third of June, the Governor took possession of the land in the name of Their Majesties with all the formalities that are required, and he sent one of the Indians to persuade and invite in peace the neighboring caciques; and the same night two of the three Indians that remained fled, and it was much good fortune all three did not escape, which gave the Christians much concern.

The next day, Wednesday, the Governor sent Captain Baltasar de Gallegos, with the Indian that remained, to look for some people or a town or house. At the time that the sun was setting, going off road, because the Indian who was the guide led them wandering and confused, thanks to God they saw from afar as many as twenty Indians painted red (which is a certain red ointment that the Indians put on when they go to war or wish to make a fine appearance), and they wore many plumes<sup>18</sup> and carried their bows and arrows. And as the Christians ran forth against them, the Indians, fleeing, plunged into a forest [*monte*], and one of them came forth to the road shouting and saying: "Sirs, for the love of God and of St. Mary do not kill me: I am Christian, like you, and I am a native of Seville, and my name is Juan Ortiz." The pleasure that the Christians felt was very great, in that God gave them an interpreter and guide at such a time, of which they had great necessity. Delighted with this pleasure, Baltasar de Gallegos and all the Indians that came with him returned that night, very late, to the camp, and the Spaniards of the army became very agitated, believing it was something else and taking up arms; but having recognized who it was, the joy that all had was great, because they estimated that by means of that interpreter they would perform their tasks better.

Without losing time, the following Saturday the Governor determined to go with that interpreter Juan Ortiz to the cacique who had held him, who was called Mocoço, in order to make peace and bring him to the friendship

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<sup>18</sup>The term *penachos* may refer to panaches, or bunches of feathers serving as a crest, rather than isolated plumes.

of the Christians. He [Mocoço] waited in his town with his Indians and wives and children, lacking no one, and complained to the Governor about the caciques Orriygua, Neguarete, Çapaloey and Eçita, all four of whom are caciques on that coast, saying that they menaced him because he took our friendship and was willing to give that Christian interpreter to the Christians. Using the same interpreter, the Governor told him that he should not be afraid of those caciques or of others, because he would help him, and all the Christians and many more who would come soon would be his friends and would help him against his enemies.

This same day Captain Juan Ruiz Lobillo set out with as many as forty soldiers, on foot, for the interior, and he attacked some settlements [*ranchos*] though could not take but two Indian women; and in order to rescue them, nine Indians followed him for three leagues shooting arrows at him, and they killed one Christian and wounded three or four without his being able to do them damage, although he had arquebusiers and crossbowmen, because those Indians are so agile and such fine warriors that in any nation of the world they would be seen as men.

## THREE

HOW WAR BEGAN TO KINDLE AND WAS CRUELLY  
FOUGHT, AND HOW THE LIEUTENANT GENERAL  
RETURNED TO THE ISLAND OF CUBA, AND HOW  
THE GOVERNOR DEPARTED FROM THAT  
PORT OF SPIRITU SANCTO FOR  
THE INTERIOR, AND OF WHAT  
HAPPENED TO HIM AND HIS  
PEOPLE UNTIL THE TENTH  
OF AUGUST OF THE SAME  
YEAR OF FIFTEEN  
THIRTY-NINE.

This Governor was very given to hunting and killing Indians, from the time that he served in the army of Governor Pedrarias Dávila in the provinces of Castilla del Oro and Nicaragua, and he also found himself in Peru

and took part in the imprisonment of Atabaliba, where he became rich, and he was one of those who returned to Spain richer, because he carried and put in a safe place in Seville about one hundred thousand pesos of gold; and he decided to return to the Indies only to lose them along with his life, and to continue the bloody tactics of times past, which had been his practice in the aforementioned places. Therefore, continuing his conquest, he commanded that General Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa should go to Oçita, because it was said that there was a gathering of people there. And this Captain having gone there, he found the people gone, and he burned the town, and he set the dogs on [aperrear] an Indian he brought as guide. The reader must understand that to set the dogs on [an Indian] is to make the dogs eat them or kill them, tearing the Indian to pieces. The conquistadors in the Indies have always used greyhounds or fierce and valiant dogs in war; and this is why hunting Indians was mentioned above. Therefore, that guide was killed in that way, because he lied and guided poorly.

While Vasco Porcallo did what has been said, the Governor sent another Indian as messenger to the cacique Orriparacogi. [The messenger] did not return because an Indian woman told him that he should not, and for that she was thrown to the dogs.

Among the soldiers there were diverse opinions about whether it would be good to settle there or not, because the land seemed sterile, as in truth that coast is reputed to be. On account of this, the Governor decided to send Captain Baltasar de Gallegos to Orriparagi [Orriparacogi] with eighty on horseback and one hundred foot soldiers, and he departed on Friday the twentieth of June.

Likewise the Governor sent Juan de Añasco, in the small vessels from the ships, along the seacoast with a certain number of foot soldiers, to break up a meeting that the Indians were holding, or to go and see what kind of affair it was. He found them on an island, where he had a fray with them. He killed nine or ten Indians with the light artillery<sup>19</sup> that he had, and they shot arrows and wounded as many or more Christians. Because he could not make them leave the island, he sent for aid, and the messenger was a nobleman called Juan de Vega. He asked for people on horseback, in order to take the mainland where they had to retreat, because with the people that he had and any others who might go, he intended to fight with the Indians. The

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<sup>19</sup>The phrase *versos de la artilleria* refers to a light piece of artillery (the *verso*), half the size and caliber of the *culebrina*, a long and narrow artillery piece. These weapons were probably hand cannons.

Governor sent Vasco Porcallo with forty on horseback and some foot soldiers; but when this aid arrived, the Indians had already gone; and the Spaniards, in order not to have gone in vain, scoured the land and captured some Indians, whom they brought to the camp. Vasco Porcallo having come from that excursion, he had some unpleasantness with the Governor (which is not mentioned in this relation). The historian could not get the one who informed him [Rangel] to finish the story, for various reasons. And it was seen as a good measure that Vasco Porcallo should return to Cuba to attend to the affairs of the government there and to provide to the Governor and his army, when necessary, with what they might have need of. Many regretted the departure of this nobleman, because he was a willing friend and he did much for them.

The Governor had commanded Baltasar de Gallegos, that even though he might not find good land, he should write good news, in order to inspire the people. And although it was not of his disposition to lie, because he was a man of truth, in order to carry out the command of his superior and, even more, not to dismay the people, he always wrote two letters of different tenors: one of truth and the other of lies; but those lies, stated with such cunning, and with equivocal words, could be understood one way and the other, because it was commanded. Concerning this he said that the letter of truth had more power to excuse him, than the false one malice to incriminate him. And thus the Governor did not reveal the truthful items, saying rather that these that he did not reveal were news of great secrets, which later on would demonstrate much utility for all; and he showed them the equivocal and false letters and gave them some statements as seemed [best].

And those letters, although they did not promise anything with certainty, gave hopes and indications that stirred their desires to go forward and leave such uncertainties behind; but as the sins of man are the reason that the lie sometimes finds favor and credit, all fell into conformity and unanimously asked for entrance into the interior, which was what the Governor was scheming. And those who had been ordered to remain there with Captain Calderón regretted this greatly. There were forty on horseback and sixty foot soldiers left to guard the town and supplies, the port, and the brigantines and small vessels that remained, because all the large ships had been dispatched to Havana.

Having this agreement willingly, the Governor departed from the town and port of Spiritu Sancto (called thus for the day that the Governor and his armada arrived there), and this departure was on a Tuesday, the fifteenth of July of the same year of fifteen thirty-nine. And that day they spent the night

at the river [*rio*] of Mocoço, bringing behind them many pigs that had been brought over in the armada for food in an emergency. And they made two bridges on which this army crossed the river. The next day they went to the lake [*laguna*] of the Rabbit, and that name was given to it because a rabbit which appeared in the camp frightened all the horses, and they broke loose, fleeing back more than a league, leaving not one behind, and all the Christians scattered in order to go after the horses, unarmed. If Indians had attacked them, although they [the Indians] might be few, the Spaniards would have got what they deserved, and in return for their lack of caution, a shameful end to the war was prepared for them. Their horses having been recovered, they went the next day to the lake of St. John, and the next day, under a very strong sun, they went to a savannah [*sabana*], where they arrived very fatigued. A steward of the Governor, who was named Prado, died of thirst,<sup>20</sup> and many of the foot soldiers were in much hardship, and others would have accompanied the steward, if those on horseback had not aided them. The next day they came to the savannah of Guaçoco, and the soldiers went into cornfields and brought green corn, with which they were very happy, because it was the first that they saw in that land. Early the next day they arrived at Luca, a pretty town, and there Baltasar de Gallegos came to meet the Governor.

The following Monday, the twenty-first of July, they joined with the people that Baltasar Gallegos had. The Governor sent a messenger to Urripacoxi, and a reply did not come; and on Wednesday, the twenty-third of the aforementioned month, the Governor and his army departed, and he went to Viçela, and passed it to sleep farther on; and on Thursday they spent the night at another town that is called Tocaste, which is on a large lake. And this same day the Governor went out with some on horseback headed for Ocale, because they had told him great news of the riches that he thought he would find there. And as he saw that the roads were broad, he thought that his hands were already on the prey. He commanded one of his soldiers, named Rodrigo Rangel (because, in addition to being a good soldier and a good man, he had a good horse), to return to the main army for more people to come and accompany him; and that squire went, although not without misgivings about what could happen, since only ten on horseback remaining with the Governor seemed few to him, and he was sending that nobleman alone and across a land of enemies and bad crossings; but even though some might take after him, he would either die or pass by force and would not

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<sup>20</sup>Probably a victim of heatstroke in the July heat of peninsular Florida.

return without a reply. Because he thought it cowardly to ask for company, he bowed his head and obeyed. But I do not praise such determination, since in truth, in necessary and manifest matters, permission is given so that with reason one may express one's opinions to the prince and suggest how he would be better served, and how his commands could be better carried out.

What happened to this equestrian messenger this day he refused to say, because whatever he said would be in his own interest; but it suffices to say that his intention as a valiant man was well tested, and he came upon many Indians who were following the trail of the Governor, but he continued onward. And having arrived at the main army, the *maestre de campo*<sup>21</sup> gave him fourteen on horseback, with which the number of horses that the Governor had was increased to twenty-six.

The next day, Friday, the army moved along the trail of the Governor, and on the road they found two on horseback that the Governor sent to the *maestre de campo*, who was a nobleman called Luis de Moscoso, to command that he should not move, and they went back to sleep where they had come from, because there was a surprise attack [*guazábara*] (which is the same as a skirmish) with the Indians, and they killed a horse of Don Carlos Enríquez, son-in-law of the Governor, married to his niece, a native of Jerez de Badajoz, and they wounded some Christians. And they suffered much from hunger, for they were eating the ears of corn with the cobs (or wood, which it nearly is) upon which the kernels grow.

The next day, Saturday, the Governor found the roads broader and the land better, and he sent another two on horseback for another thirty men, and he sent to say that the army should move following his trail. And the *maestre de campo* sent Nuño de Tovar with thirty on horseback, and he moved according to the command the Governor sent him. The Governor, with the twenty-six on horseback who went with him, arrived on the day of St. Anne at the river or swamp<sup>22</sup> of Cale, and it was of great current and broad, and they crossed it with great difficulty, and where there was no need of a bridge, they crossed with the water at their chests and at the chin, with their clothes and saddles on their heads, a distance of more than three cross-

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<sup>21</sup>The *maestre de campo*, or field master, was in charge of the daily affairs of the army and ranked under the commander (in this case, Hernando de Soto). The rank roughly corresponds to the modern brigadier general. Luis de Moscoso would later fill the vacancy created by the death of De Soto (see chapter 9).

<sup>22</sup>The description  *río o ciénaga*, which is used in reference to both Cale here and Ivitachuco in chapter 4, probably refers to the floodplain swamp associated with the main channel of these rivers.

bow shots.<sup>23</sup> The thirty on horseback that Nuño de Tovar led crossed the following Sunday, and the current carried off a horse and it drowned. And seeing this, the rest crossed with ropes, as those who crossed first with the Governor had done. These people and their Governor arrived at the first town of Ocale, which was called Uqueten, where they captured two Indians: and then he provided that some on horseback and the mules that they had carried from Cuba should go with corn to aid those who were coming behind, since there they had found abundance; and it did not arrive at a bad time, because they found them in that swamp eating herbs and their roots, some roasted and others stewed, without having salt and, what was worse, without knowing what they were. They were glad for the arrival of provisions, and the great hunger and necessity that they had gave them a refreshment and very acceptable flavor, and of such savor that it revived their diligence and brought forth strength from weakness, and the last of the rear guard arrived the following Tuesday where Governor Hernando de Soto was. But they [the Indians] had already wounded some soldiers who strayed and had killed a crossbowman who was named Mendoza. Having joined the army, they went to Ocale, a town in a good region of corn; and there, going to Acuera for supplies, the Indians, on two occasions, killed three soldiers of the guard of the Governor and wounded others and killed a horse, and all that was due to poor order, since those Indians, although they are archers and have very strong bows and are very skillful and accurate marksmen, their arrows do not have poison [*hierba*] nor do they know what it is.

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<sup>23</sup>The extreme range of a crossbow was perhaps 380 yards, making the distance of water crossed on foot over 1,000 yards.

## FOUR

HOW GOVERNOR HERNANDO DE SOTO, PROCEEDING IN  
HIS CONQUEST, WENT ONWARD, AND HOW THE  
INDIANS WISHED TO KILL OR CAPTURE HIM  
THROUGH DECEIT, IN ORDER TO LIBERATE  
A CACIQUE HE HAD WITH HIM, AND HOW  
A CACIQUE GAVE A BLOW TO THE GOVER-  
NOR WHICH BATHED HIS TEETH IN  
BLOOD. AND OTHER MATTERS  
SUITABLE TO THE DISCOURSE  
OF THE HISTORY ARE  
TREATED.

On the eleventh of August of the same year, the Governor departed from Ocale with fifty on horseback and one hundred foot soldiers in search of Apalache, because it was rumored that it had many people, and Luis de Moscoso remained behind with the rest of the army to see what happened farther on; and that day they went to sleep at Itaraholata, a good town with plenty of corn. There an Indian attacked Captain Maldonado and badly wounded his horse and would have pulled the lance from his hands if the Governor had not arrived by chance of fortune, although Maldonado was a good nobleman and one of the most valiant of that army; but the Indians of that land are very bellicose and indomitable and strong people.

The next day they went to Potano, and the next day, Wednesday, they arrived at Utinamocharra, and from there they went to the town of Mala-Paz, which name was given it because Juan de Añasco, having captured on the road thirty persons of that cacique, he [the cacique] sent the message that he wished peace, so that they might give them back to him, and he sent in his stead a vassal to negotiate with him. He [Añasco] believed that it was the cacique himself and gave his people to him. Following this, this Indian fleeing from the Christians the next day, a noble greyhound from Ireland plunged after him into the multitude of Indians that were on a densely wooded hill [*arcabuco*]. It rushed to the clamor and entered among all the Indians; and although it passed by many, not one did it seize but the one who had fled, who was among the multitude, and it held him by the fleshy



part of the arm in such a manner that the Indian was thrown down and apprehended.

The next day the Christians arrived at a pretty town, where they found much food and many very delicious small chestnuts piled up. These are native chestnuts; but the trees which bear them are no taller than two palms of earth, and thus they grow in burrs covered with bristles.<sup>24</sup> There are other chestnuts in the land, which the Spaniards saw and ate, which are the same as those from Spain, and they grow on chestnut trees just as large and mighty, and with the same leaf and bristles or burrs, just as plump and of very good flavor.

This army went from there to a river that they call [the river] of the Discords, and he who gave this relation wished not to mention the reason, because he is an honest man, not disposed to relate the guilts or frailties of his friends. That day they made a bridge of pines, since there were many there, and the next day, Sunday, they crossed that river with as much or more hardship than the one at Ocale. The following day, Monday, they arrived at Aguacaleyquen, and Rodrigo Rangel and Villalobos, two gentlemen, equestrians but gentlemen (I say equestrians because in this army they were men on horseback), captured in a cornfield an Indian man and woman, and she showed them where the corn was concealed, and the Indian man led Captain Baltasar de Gallegos to where he captured seventeen persons, and among them an Indian woman, daughter of the cacique, for it seemed reasonable that this would make her father come in peace; but he wished to liberate her without that, and his deceptions and tricks were no less than those of these conquistadors. On the twenty-second of August a great multitude of Indians appeared, and the Governor, seeing that the land already showed itself to be more populated and better supplied, sent eight on horseback with all dispatch to call the *maestre de campo*, Luis de Moscoso, in order that with all the army [at Ocale] he should come to join with him; and the *maestre de campo* had no small diligence in carrying out that command, and on the fourth of September he arrived where the Governor was, and all were delighted to meet together; because as they had imprisoned the cacique, it was feared that the Indians would ally themselves: and it was not a bad thought, judging by what appeared later.

On the ninth of September they all departed together from Aguacaleyquen, taking with them the cacique and his daughter and a principal Indian, who was named Guatutima, as guide, because he said that he knew much of

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<sup>24</sup>Probably referring to the chinquapin.

what was farther on and gave very great news about it. And they made a bridge of pines in order to cross the river of Aguacaleyquen, and they spent the night at a small town. The next day, Friday, they went to Uriutina, a town of pleasant view and with much food, and in it there was a very large hut, in the middle of which there was a large courtyard.<sup>25</sup> There was now good population through there. After they left from Aguacaleyquen, messengers from Uçachile, a great cacique, went and came, playing on a flute for ceremony. And on Friday, the twelfth of September, these Christians arrived at a town that they called [the town] of Many Waters, because it rained so much that they could not leave from there on Saturday or on Sunday. They left the following Monday, the fifteenth of that month, and found a very bad swamp and all the road very difficult, and they spent the night at Napituca, which was a very pleasant town, well situated and with much food. There the Indians made use of all their deceits and crafts to recover their cacique of Aguacaleyquen, and in the end the matter came to where the Governor saw himself in great danger; but their deceits and tricks were understood, and he did them a greater one, in this way.

Seven caciques from those districts, with their people, joined together and sent a message to the Governor saying that they were subjects of Uçachile, and that by his commission and their will, they wished to be friends of the Christians and to help them against Apalache, a strong province, an enemy of Uçachile and of them, and that to this end they had come, induced and requested by Aguacaleyquen (who is the cacique that the Christians held imprisoned), and that they were afraid to enter in the camp and be detained: therefore, the Governor should bring Aguacaleyquen with him and come forth to them to speak in a large savannah that there was there, to converse about this business. Their entreaties were understood and their message was accepted, and the Governor came forth to speak to them; but he commanded the Christians to arm and mount, and that at the signal of a trumpet they should attack the Indians. [The Governor] came forth to the savannah with only those of his guard and a chair to sit upon, and the cacique of Aguacaleyquen with him. Scarcely had the Governor seated himself, and the conversa-

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<sup>25</sup>This description of a *gran patio* in the middle of a *gran buhio* seems to refer to an open court within a large aboriginal structure and mirrors various descriptions of aboriginal council houses, with a large open space in the center of the roof. For further information, see Gary N. Shapiro and John H. Hann, "The Documentary Image of the Council Houses of Spanish Florida Tested by Excavations at the Mission of San Luis de Talimali," in *Columbian Consequences: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands East*, ed. D. H. Thomas, 511-26 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

tion was beginning, when he saw himself immediately surrounded with Indians with their bows and arrows, and from many directions came innumerable others, in such a manner that the danger that the Governor was in was manifest. And before the trumpet could sound, the *maestre de campo*, Luis de Moscoso, struck his legs to his horse saying: "Come on, men, Santiago,<sup>26</sup> Santiago, and at them." And thus, all of a sudden, the people on horseback went lancing many Indians, and the stratagem only gained them the upper hand, allowing our men to strike first; notwithstanding, they [the Indians] defended themselves and fought like men of great spirit, and they killed the horse of the Governor and killed another belonging to a gentleman, called Sagredo, and wounded others. And after the fight lasted a good period of time, the Indians fled and took shelter in two lakes; and the Spaniards encircled one, and the other they could not, and they surrounded the first one, keeping vigil all night and until the morning when they [the Indians] surrendered, and they brought out from there as prisoners three hundred Indians and five or six *caciques* among them.

Uriutina in the end remained alone. He did not wish to leave until some Indians from Uçachile swam in for him, and they brought him out, and upon leaving, he asked for a messenger for his land, and [the messenger] having been brought, he spoke to him thus: "Look, go to my [people] and tell them that for me they should have no concern: that I have done, as a valiant man and lord, what there was to do and struggled and fought like a man until they left me alone; and if I withdrew to this lake, it was not to flee death or not to die as befits me, but rather in order to inspire those who were within and urge them not to give up: and after they gave themselves up, I never surrendered until these Indians from Uçachile, who are of our nation, begged me, saying that this was advisable to all. Therefore, what I charge and pray to them is that neither out of respect for me nor for another should they deal with these Christians, who are devils and who are more than a match for them, and that they should believe for certain that if I have to die, it will be as a valiant man." All of which was then referred and declared to the Governor by Juan Ortiz, the interpreter, who is that Christian whom the history has related they found in the land, by chance of fortune.

The Indians who were captured in the manner already stated were taken to be put in a hut, their hands tied behind. The Governor walked among them in order to meet the *caciques*, encouraging them in order to bring them to peace and concord, and having them untied so that they might be better

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<sup>26</sup>The call to Santiago, or St. James, was a familiar battle cry of the reconquest in Spain.

treated than the other common Indians. One of those caciques, as soon as they untied him, the Governor being next to him, raised his arm and gave the Governor such a great blow that it bathed his teeth in blood and made him spit out much of it, for which they tied him and the other [caciques] each to poles and they were riddled with arrows. Other Indians did many other deeds, the full account of which could not be written, according to what he who found himself present told the historian; for which reason the Governor, seeing that with so few Indians and without weapons the Christians were so afflicted, and he no less so, spoke thus: "Oh help me God, and if only those lords of the Council were here so that they might see how His Majesty is served in these parts!" But it is because they know it, says the chronicler, that they have commanded the tyrannies and cruelties to cease, and to have better order in the pacification of the Indies, so that God, Our Lord, and the Imperial Majesty are better served, and the consciences of the conquistadors are at peace, and the natives of the land are not maltreated.

Tuesday, the twenty-third of September, the Governor and his army left from Napituca and arrived at the river of the Deer. This name was given to it because the Indian messengers from Uçachile brought there certain deer, since there are many and good ones in that land. And in order to cross this river they made a bridge of three large pines in length and four in breadth (these pines are perfect and like the very large ones from Spain), and when all the army had finished crossing the river, which was on the twenty-fifth of that month, they passed through two small towns the same day and one very large one that is called Apalu, and they arrived to spend the night at Uçachile. But in all these towns they found the people gone, and some captains went out to pillage [*ranchear*]<sup>27</sup> and captured many people.

They departed from Uçachile the following Monday, the twenty-ninth of the month, and having crossed a large forest, they spent the night in a pine forest [*pinar*]. A lad, called Cadena, turned back without permission for a sword, and the Governor wished to have him hung for both offenses, but through the entreaties of good persons, he escaped [this punishment]. The next day, Tuesday, the thirtieth of the month of September, they arrived at Agile, a subject of Apalache, and they captured some women; and they are such that one Indian woman took a *bachiller*<sup>28</sup> named Herrera, who was alone with her and behind his other companions, and she seized him by the

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<sup>27</sup> The term *ranchear* was a euphemism for pillaging, derived from the practice of quartering soldiers as an excuse to loot.

<sup>28</sup> Recipient of an academic degree.

genitals and held him very fatigued and submissive, and perhaps if other Christians had not passed and aided him, the Indian woman would have killed him. It was not that he wished to have intercourse with her as a lustful man, but rather that she wished to liberate herself and flee. Wednesday, the first of October, Governor Hernando de Soto left from Agile with his people and arrived at the river or swamp of Ivitachuco, and they made a bridge; and in a canebrake<sup>29</sup> on the other side was an ambush of Indians, and they shot three Christians with arrows; and they finished crossing that swamp the following Friday at midday, and there a horse drowned. And they went to sleep at Ivitachuco and found the town burning, for the Indians had set fire to it. Sunday, the fifth of October, they went to Calahuchi, and they took two Indian men and an Indian woman and jerked venison in great quantity, and there the guide who led them fled.

The next day they went forward carrying as guide an old Indian who got them lost, and an Indian woman led them to Iviachica, and they found all the people gone, and the next day two Captains left from there and found all the people gone. Juan de Añasco had left from this town, and eight leagues from it, he found the port where Pánfilo de Narváez<sup>30</sup> had embarked in the boats that he made. This he recognized by the skulls of the horses and site of the forge and cribs and mortars that they had made in order to grind the corn, and by crosses fashioned on the trees. And they wintered there and were there until the fourth of March of the year of fifteen forty, in which time came to pass many notable things with the Indians, who are most valiant men, and by what will now be told, the discerning reader will be able to surmise their great spirit and boldness. [For instance,] two Indians came forth against eight men on horseback; and they set fire to the town twice, and with ambushes they killed many Christians at other times, and although the Spaniards pursued them and burned them, never did they wish to come in peace. If they cut off the hands and noses of some Indians, they did not show more feeling than if each one of them was a Mucio Scévola, the Roman. Not one of them denied being from Apalache for fear of death. And upon taking one, when they asked him where he was from, he responded with pride: "Where am I from? . . . I am an Indian of Apalache," like one who gave to understand that he took offense from whoever might think that he was of another people but Apalache.

The Governor decided to go farther into the interior, because an Indian

<sup>29</sup>*Un carrizal*, referring to land covered in reed grass.

<sup>30</sup>Narváez skirted the Gulf Coast in 1528.

boy gave great news of what there was in the interior; and he sent Juan de Añasco with thirty on horseback for Captain Calderón and the people who had remained in the port, and they burned the supplies that they left behind and the town, and Captain Calderón came by land with all the people, and Juan de Añasco came by the sea, with the brigantines and small vessels, up to the port of Apalache. Saturday, the nineteenth of November, Juan de Añasco arrived at the port, and then Maldonado was dispatched in the brigantines along the coast to find a port to the west [*Hueste-Occidente*].

And at this time Captain Calderón arrived with all the people, minus two men and seven horses that the Indians killed on the road. Maldonado discovered a very good port and brought an Indian from a province that is next to that coast, which is called Achuse, and he brought a good blanket of saffles (although they had already seen others in Apalache, but not like this).

Captain Maldonado was dispatched for Havana, and he left from Apalache on the twenty-sixth of February of fifteen forty, with an order and command from the Governor that he should return to the port that he had discovered, and to that coast where the Governor planned to come.

The province of Apalache is very fertile and very abundant in supplies, with much corn and beans [*fésoules*] and squash [*calabazas*], and diverse fruits, and many deer and many varieties of birds, and near the sea there are many and good fish, and it is a pleasant land although there are swamps; but they are firm because they are over sand.

## FIVE

HOW GOVERNOR HERNANDO DE SOTO AND HIS PEOPLE  
DEPARTED FROM IVIAHICA IN SEARCH OF CAPACHEQUI,  
AND HOW THE GUIDE THEY HAD, WHEN  
HE DID NOT KNOW MORE OF WHAT THERE WAS  
FARTHER ON, MADE HIMSELF OUT TO BE  
POSSESSED; AND DIVERSE AND VERY  
NOTABLE THINGS ARE TREATED.

The departure from Iviahica, in search of Capachequi, began Wednesday, the third day of March of fifteen forty, and the Governor with his army spent the night at the river of Guacuca; and having departed from there, they

went to the river of Capachequi, at which they arrived early the following Friday, and they made a canoe or piragua<sup>31</sup> in order to cross it; and the river was so broad that Cristobal Mosquera, who was the best thrower, tried but did not manage to throw a stone across it. And they took the chains in which they brought the Indians, strongly joined with some S hooks of iron, and having made one chain from all, they attached one end of the chain from one bank and the other one from the other, in order to cross the piragua, and the current was such that it broke the chain two times; and seeing this, they attached many ropes and from these made two, and they attached one to the stern and the other to the prow, and pulling from one side and from the other, the people and the clothing crossed. In order to get the horses across, they made long ropes and attached them to the neck; and although the current pushed them down, pulling the ropes drew them out, but with difficulty, and some half drowned. And on Wednesday, the ninth of March, all the army finished crossing the river of Capachequi, and they left to sleep in a pine forest. And the next day, Thursday, they arrived at the first town of Capachequi, which was well supplied, but among densely wooded hills or land very closed in with groves of trees [*arboledas*], and thus they passed on to sleep at another town farther on. And they came upon a bad swamp, next to the town, with a strong current, and before arriving at [the swamp], they crossed a very large stretch of water that came to the cinches and saddle pads of the horses, in such a manner that all the army was not able to finish crossing that day on account of the bad crossing. There one hundred<sup>32</sup> soldiers with swords and shields strayed away, and an equal number of Indians wounded one of them in the head and killed him, and they would have killed all of them if they had not been aided.

On the sixteenth of March they left from Capachequi and spent the night at White Spring. This is a very beautiful spring [*fuentes*], with a great abundance [*gran golpe*] of good water, and it has fish. And the following day they spent the night at the river of Toa, where they made two bridges, and the horse of Lorenzo Suárez, son of Vasco Porcallo, drowned. And the following Sunday, the twenty-first of the month, they arrived at the crossing of the river of Toa, and two times they made a bridge of pines, and the great current broke them, and they made another bridge of timbers crossed in a cer-

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<sup>31</sup>A *piragua* was a long and narrow vessel (larger than a canoe) typically made from a single piece of wood, although the gunwales were often made of planks or canes.

<sup>32</sup>This number [*cient*] seems much too large and may be a mistranscription of five [*cinco*], fitting more closely with the Elvas account.

tain way, which a gentleman, called Nuño de Tovar, described, at which all laughed, but it was true what he said; and having made [the bridge] in that way, they crossed very well. And on Monday all the army finished crossing, and they spent the night in a pine forest, although they were separated and in bad order. And early on Tuesday they arrived at Toa, a large town, and the Governor wished to go farther, but they did not let him.

Wednesday, the twenty-fourth of the month, the Governor left from there at midnight, secretly, with up to forty noblemen and gentlemen on horseback, and those whom for diverse reasons he had not wished to put under another Captain. And they traveled all that day until the night, when they found a bad and deep crossing of water, and although it was at night, they crossed it, and they walked that day twelve leagues; and the next day, which was Maundy Thursday, in the morning, they arrived at the province [población] of Chisi and crossed a branch of a large river, very broad, some of it on foot, and even a good part of it swimming, and they attacked a town that was on an island in this river, where they captured some people and found food. And because the place was dangerous, before canoes came they went back the same way they had entered, but first they had for lunch some hens of the land, which are called guanajas [turkeys], and loins of venison that they found roasted on a *barbacoa*, which is like on a grill.<sup>33</sup> And although it was Maundy Thursday, there was not one so Christian that he had scruples about eating the meat. And the boy Perico that they had brought from Apalache as guide led them there.

And they passed on to other towns, and at a bad crossing of a swamp, some horses drowned, because they were put in to swim with the saddles, while their owners crossed over on a beam which traversed the current of the water. And crossing thus one Benito Fernández, a Portuguese, fell from the beam and drowned. This day they arrived at a town where principal Indians came as messengers from Ichisi, and one of them asked the Governor and said three words, one after the other, in this manner: "Who are you? What do you want? Where are you going?" And they brought presents of hides, blankets of the land, which were the first gifts as a signal of peace; all of which was on Maundy Thursday and on the Day of the Incarnation. To the questions of the Indian, the Governor responded that he was a Captain of

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<sup>33</sup>The term *barbacoa* refers to a framework of sticks that was used to cook meat, although other raised frameworks, such as a bench or corncrib, were often described using the same word. This term, which originated among the Arawak Indians of the Caribbean, survives today in the word *barbecue*.



the great King of Spain; that in his name he came to give them to understand the sacred faith of Christ, and that they should know him and be saved, and give obedience to the apostolic church of Rome and to the Supreme Pontiff and Vicar of God who resides there, and that in the temporal world they should recognize as king and lord the Emperor, king of Castile, our Lord, as his vassals, and that they would treat them all well, and with peace and justice, like his other Christian vassals.

On Monday, the twenty-ninth of March, they left from there for Ichisi, and it rained so much, and a small river swelled in such a manner, that if they had not made much haste to cross, all of the army would have been endangered. This day Indian men and women came forth to receive them. The women came clothed in white, and they made a fine appearance, and they gave to the Christians tortillas of corn and some bundles of spring onions exactly like those of Castile, as fat as the tip of the thumb and more. And that was a food which helped them much from then on; and they ate them with tortillas, roasted and stewed and raw, and it was a great aid to them because they are very good. The white clothing in which those Indian women came clothed are some blankets of both coarse and fine linen. They make the thread of them from the bark of the mulberry trees; not from the outside but rather from the middle; and they know how to process and spin and prepare it so well and weave it, that they make very pretty blankets. And they put one on from the waist down, and another tied by one side and the top placed upon the shoulders, like those Bohemians or Egyptians who are in the habit of sometimes wandering through Spain. The thread is such that he who found himself there certified to me that he saw the women spin it from that bark of mulberry trees and make it as good as the most precious thread from Portugal that the women in Spain procure in order to sew, and some more thin and even, and stronger. The mulberry trees are exactly like those of Spain, and as large and larger; but the leaf is softer and better for silk, and the mulberries better for eating and even larger than those from Spain, and the Spaniards also made good use of them many times, in order to sustain themselves. They arrived that day at a town of a cacique subject to Ichisi, a pretty town and with plenty of food, and he [the cacique] gave them willingly of what he had, and they rested there on Tuesday, and then on Wednesday, the last day of March, the Governor and his army departed, and they arrived at the Great River,<sup>34</sup> where they had many canoes in which they

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<sup>34</sup>This is the only river that was denoted by the capitalized *Río Grande* in Oviedo's printed text, although the river beyond Quizqui (the Mississippi) was later termed *el río grande*.

crossed very well and arrived at the town of the lord, who was one-eyed, and he gave them very good food and fifteen Indians to carry the burdens. And as he was the first who came in peace, they did not wish to be tiresome. They were there Thursday, the first of April, and they placed a cross on the mound [*cerro*] of the town and informed them through the interpreter of the sanctity of the cross, and they received it and appeared to adore it with much devotion.

Friday, the second day of the month of April, this army departed from there and slept in the open, and the next day they arrived at a good river and found deserted huts, and messengers arrived from Altamaha and led them to a town where they found an abundance of food, and a messenger from Altamaha came with a present, and the following day they brought many canoes and the army crossed very well. And from there the Governor sent a message summoning the cacique Çamumo, and they said that he ate and slept and walked continually armed, that he never took off the weapons, because he was on the frontier [*frontera*] of another cacique called Cofitachequi, his enemy, and that he would not come without weapons, and the Governor replied and said that he should come as he might wish. And he came and the Governor gave him a large feather colored with silver, and the cacique took it very happily and said to the Governor: "You are from heaven, and this your feather that you give me, I can eat with it; I will go forth to war with it; I will sleep with my wife with it." And the Governor said to him that yes, all this he could do. This Çamumo and those others were subjects of a great cacique who is called Ocute. And this one with the feather asked the Governor to whom he had to give the tribute in the future, if he should give it to the Governor or to Ocute. And the Governor suspected that this question might have been asked with cunning, and he responded that he held Ocute as a brother, that he should give Ocute his tribute until the Governor should command something else.

From there he sent messengers to summon Ocute, and he came there, and the Governor gave him a hat of yellow satin, and a shirt, and a feather, and he placed a cross there in Altamaha, and it was well received.

The next day, Thursday, the eighth of April, the Governor departed from there with his army, and he took Ocute with him, and they went to sleep at some huts, and on Friday they arrived at the town of Ocute. And the Governor got angry with him, and he [Ocute] trembled with fear; and after that a great number of Indians came with supplies, and they gave the Christians as many Indian burden bearers as they wished, and a cross was placed, and

they appeared to receive it with much devotion and adored it on their knees, as they saw the Christians do.

Monday, the twelfth of April, they departed from Ocute and arrived at Cofaqui, and principal Indians came with gifts. This cacique Cofaqui was an old man, full-bearded, and a nephew of his governed for him. The cacique Tatofa and another principal Indian came there, and they gave their presents and food, and all the *tamemes* that they had need of (in that language *tameme* means Indian burden bearer). On Thursday, the fifteenth of that month, Perico, the Indian boy who had been their guide since Apalache, began to lose his bearings, because now he did not know any more of the land, and he made himself out to be possessed, and he knew how to do it so well that the Christians thought that it was the truth; and a missionary that they had with them, named fray Juan el Evangelico, said it was so. But in fact, they had to take guides, which Tatofa gave them, in order to go to Cofitachequi across an uninhabited region [*despoblado*] of nine or ten days' journey.

Many times I am amazed by the gambling spirit, or tenacity or perversity, or perhaps I should say constancy, because it gives a better impression of the way these deceived conquistadors went on from one difficulty to another, and from another to yet a worse one, and from one danger to others and others, here losing a comrade and there three and over there more, and going from bad to worse, without learning their lesson. Oh marvelous God, what blindness and rapture under such an uncertain greed and such vain preaching as that which Hernando de Soto was able to tell those deluded soldiers that he led to a land where he had never been and had never set foot on it, and where three other Governors, more expert than he, had been lost, which were Juan Ponce, Garay,<sup>35</sup> and Pánfilo de Narváez, any one of whom had more experience than he in matters of the Indies, and they were persons of more credit than he in that; because he knew nothing either of the islands or the land of the North, knowing only the method of government of Pedrarias, in Castilla del Oro and Nicaragua, and of Peru, which was another manner of dealing with the Indians; and he thought that [experience] from there sufficed to know how to govern here on the coast of the North, and he deluded himself, as this history will relate.

Let us return to the history and route of this Captain or Governor. I knew well and spoke and communicated with him and the three mentioned

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<sup>35</sup>Francisco de Garay made two unsuccessful expeditions from Jamaica to Florida in 1518 and 1519 and later became the Governor of Panuco in Mexico.

above, and the licenciado Ayllón,<sup>36</sup> who was also lost in that land of the North. Friday, the sixteenth of the month, this Governor and his people spent the night at a creek [*arroyo*] on the way to Cofitachequi, and the next day they crossed an extremely large river, divided in two branches, broader than a long shot of an arquebus,<sup>37</sup> and it had many bad fords of many flat stones [*lajas*], and it came up to the stirrups, and in places up to the saddle pads. The current was very strong, and there was not a man on horseback who dared to take a foot soldier on the rear. The foot soldiers passed across farther upstream on the river, through more deep [water], in this manner. They made a string of thirty or forty men tied one with another, and thus they crossed, the ones holding themselves to the others; and although some were in much danger, thanks to God not one drowned, because they aided them with the horses, and gave them the butt of their lance or the tail of their horse, and thus all came forth and slept in a forest.

This day they lost many pigs of those that they had brought tame from Cuba, which the current carried off. The next day, Sunday, they went to another forest or grove [*boscaje*] to rest; and the next day, Monday, they traveled without a road and crossed another very large river, and on Tuesday they spent the night alongside a stream, and on Wednesday they arrived at another extremely large river, and difficult to cross, which was divided in two branches, with bad entrances and worse exits. And now the Christians carried nothing to eat, and with great labour they crossed this river, and arrived at some settlements of fishermen or hunters, and the Indians that they brought lost their bearings, since neither they nor the Spaniards knew the road nor what way they should take, and among them there were diverse opinions. Some said that they should turn back; others said that they should go in another direction or by another way; and the Governor proposed, as he had always done, that it was better to go forward, without his or their knowing in what they guessed correctly or in what they erred. And being perplexed in this labyrinth, on Friday, the twenty-third of April, the Governor sent men to look for roads or towns in this manner: Baltasar de Gallegos went upriver to the northwest, and Juan de Añasco went downriver<sup>38</sup> to the southeast, each with ten on horseback and rations for ten days. And that day other Captains came from exploring, and they had not found anything. And

<sup>36</sup>Ayllón's ill-fated colony on the Atlantic Coast dated to 1526.

<sup>37</sup>An arquebus was a heavy matchlock gun.

<sup>38</sup>The text actually reads *el río arriba*, or upriver, but since this direction is opposite that of Gallegos, and since rivers on the southeastern Atlantic slope tend to flow northwest to southeast, Añasco is assumed to have gone downstream.

on Saturday the Governor sent Juan Ruiz Lobillo to the north with four on horseback, with rations for ten days; and he commanded that they kill the large sows that they had in the army, and they gave as rations one pound of meat to each man, and with it, the herbs and amaranths [*bledos*] that they looked for, and thus they supplied the best that they could in their need, not without great conflict and hardship, and the horses without any food, and they and their owners dying of hunger, without a road, with continual rain, the rivers continually swelling and narrowing the land, and without hope of towns or knowledge of where they had to go to look, calling and asking God for mercy.

And Our Lord remedied them in this manner: on Sunday, the twenty-fifth of April, Juan de Añasco came with news that he had found a town and food. They were very happy, and he brought an interpreter and guide, and thus the rations of the meat ceased, and each one fed himself as he was able, with unknown herbs and amaranths, so that the meat might remain for future use. And the Governor determined to depart then, and having written some letters and placed them in some gourds [*calabazos*], they buried them in a hidden place, and on a large tree left some letters that said where the Spaniards would find them. And thus they departed with Juan de Añasco on a Monday, the twenty-sixth of April. This day the Governor arrived with some on horseback (although few) at the town that is called Himahi, and the army remained two leagues back, the horses being tired. He found in this town a barbacoa of corn and more than two and a half *cabices*<sup>39</sup> of prepared *pinol*, which is roasted corn. And the next day the army arrived, and they gave out rations of corn and *pinol*; and there were infinite mulberries, because there were many mulberry trees and they were in season: this was a great help. And also they found in the savannahs some *morotes* like those that grow in Italy on some plants and next to the ground, which are like delicious and very fragrant strawberries, and even in Galicia there are many of these. In the kingdom of Naples they call this fruit *fraoles*, and it is a delicate and exquisite thing, and they esteem it. And apart from this, they found there by the fields infinite roses, and native ones like those of Spain; and although not of so many petals through being wild, they are not of less fragrance, but rather more delicate and mellow. This town they named [the town] of Succor.

The next day Captain Alonso Romo, who had also gone to explore, ar-

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<sup>39</sup>One *cabiz* is equal to twelve *fanegas* (100 pounds of corn), making Rangel's amount approximately 3,000 pounds of corn.

rived and brought four or five Indians, and not one would make known the town of their lord nor disclose its location, although they burned one of them alive in front of the others, and all suffered that martyrdom, in order not to disclose it. The next day, Wednesday, Baltasar de Gallegos arrived with an Indian woman and news of a settlement [*poblado*]. The next day following, Lobillo came with news of roads, and he left behind two lost companions, and the Governor reprimanded him severely, and without letting him rest or eat, he made him return to look for them under penalty of his life if he should not bring them. And that was a better command, and better done and thought out than burning alive one of those Indians Alonso Romo brought, for not wanting to disclose his lord, because to such as he the Romans placed a memorial statue in the Forum, and to Christians such cruelty is permitted against no one, especially against an Indian who wished to die through being loyal to his fatherland and his lord; but later on all was repaid.